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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TEGUCIGALPA 001071

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SUBJECT: ZELAYA'S CHIEF NEGOTIATOR SAYS DE FACTOS JUST
PLAYING FOR TIME

Classified By: Ambassador Hugo Llorens for reasons 1.4 (b/d)

11. (C) Summary. Victor Meza, Minister of Governance and Justice, told the Ambassador on October 20 that he is pessimistic that a negotiated solution will be found, but that the Zelaya camp has not given up and remains open to dialogue. Meza said that while chances for signature of the Guaymuras Accord had been good on October 15, they faded the next day as the de facto regime negotiators seemed to lose their autonomy. Proposals tabled on October 16 reversed progress made and seemed to come from the de facto regime hardliners. He expressed concern that the suspension of the talks will strengthen the most radical elements of both camps, who may not be committed to finding a solution. Meza claimed that the regime is not acting in good faith and is just stalling for time. The Ambassador told Meza that the United States supports a negotiated settlement and will continue to work towards that goal. Meza told the Ambassador that a proposal is being circulated, which has not been put to either President Zelaya or Micheletti, that would have Micheletti resign, a transition government take over the running of the country, and a restored President Zelaya travel outside Honduras on a mission to restore his country's place in the international community until after the victor of the presidential election scheduled for November 29 is announced. End Summary.

State of Play on Guaymuras

12. (C) The Ambassador met on October 20 with Victor Meza, Minister of Governance and Justice and lead negotiator for President Jose Manuel "Mel" Zelaya at the Guaymuras negotiations. Meza told the Ambassador that President Zelaya was surprised at how far the negotiations were able to progress. Meza said that he himself was convinced that the agreement would be signed on October 15, but on October 16 the negotiations' momentum evaporated. Meza said the members of the de facto regime commission seemed to lose autonomy and the proposals put forth on October 16 seemed to be drafted by de facto regime members working in the presidency, rather than by the commission members. Meza said defending others' proposals weakened the negotiating ability of the de facto commissioners. Meza added that it then became clear that the de facto side was tabling proposals that had no chance of acceptance and that they were just playing for time.

13. (C) Meza said the proposal to have the National Congress approve the Guaymuras Accord was appropriate since it had been Congress who removed Zelaya and also because this

agreement was a political pact that required ratification by the political parties. He said the latest de facto proposal, which provided that the Supreme Court and the National Congress would provide opinions on the Guaymuras Accord to the commissions, would have taken too long and was unnecessary since the Supreme Court already issued an opinion regarding the San Jose Accord. Meza said the Zelaya side does not want to close the door to a negotiated solution and has stated that they remain open to dialogue. However, Meza told the Ambassador that he is pessimistic that an agreement will be reached in the next several days. Meza expressed concern that the suspension of the talks will strengthen the most radical elements in both camps and lessen the influence of the moderates who are committed to finding a solution.

14. (C) The Ambassador told Meza that the United States supports a negotiated settlement and will continue to work towards finding one so that the democratic and constitutional order is restored. The Ambassador agreed with Meza that the de facto regime does not seem to be negotiating in good faith, but that we hoped that a combination of pressure and personal self interest would ultimately lead the Micheletti side to cut a deal. The Ambassador mentioned the U.S. decision to announce another round of visa revocations singling out more regime officials and their supporters. The Ambassador told Meza that he understood that he had been through a difficult time and the recipient of verbal attacks as the lead negotiator for President Zelaya.

Rumor of a Creative Solution

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15. (C) Meza told the Ambassador that there is a proposal circulating which would have de facto regime leader Roberto Micheletti resign. A transition Cabinet would take the reins of government and President Zelaya, restored to office, would ask the Congress for permission to travel outside Honduras for a period of time in order to meet with foreign leaders to restore Honduras' place in the international community and convince donors to resume assistance. President Zelaya would return to Honduras after the winner of the presidential election was announced. Meza said that this creative solution has not been presented to either President Zelaya or Micheletti so it is not known whether either one of them would accept it. The Ambassador responded that the U.S. would support whatever the Honduran negotiators agreed to.
LLORENS